

(a) whether a proposal has been sent by the Government of Madhya Pradesh to the Central Government that Patwari Halka May be treated as a unit for purposes of Crop Insurance Scheme;

(b) whether Government have accepted the proposal; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and by when it is likely to be accepted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (c) Yes, Sir. State Government had recently requested for reduction in the unit area for crop insurance from Tehsil to Patwari Halka for major crops under National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS). The Government of India has no objection to the proposal of State Government provided that the State Government has the capacity to undertake the requisite number of Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs) under single series of CCEs for making assessment of the yield. Accordingly, State Government has notified Patwari Halka as the unit of insurance for four major crops viz. soyabean, paddy (Irrigated), Paddy (Unirrigated) and Tur for Kharif 2006 season.

Improving farm sector in Punjab

1027. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a study by International Food Policy Research Institute has put out red alert on the farm sector in the heartland of the green revolution, Punjab;

(b) whether it is also a fact that as per the study, if Punjab does not diversify from wheat urgently and more so rice, the food bowl of India could turn unproductive by the year 2030; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to improve Punjab's agricultural economy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has been working on a study "Revitalizing Policies for Food Security and Poverty Alleviation". It has Punjab as one of the focused States. There are three inter-related components of this study in Punjab (i) diversification

of agriculture with a view to augment farmers' income and bring about sustainable use of natural resources; (ii) grain management to make the whole system more cost effective and better integrated to the world economy; and (iii) rationalization of prices and input supplying agencies to make the system more efficient and cost effective. The preliminary analysis in the study indicates that the Punjab agriculture sector has reached a point where it must make significant change if it wants to move forward and regain its leadership. Conversely, if it does not rationalize incentives, create new and reinvigorate old institutions, and increase investment significantly, it will suffer declining income and employment and irreversible environmental degradation.

(c) The Government of India is advising State to promote diversification from cereal centric cropping system to more remunerative, high value crops to enhance the income of the farmers and improve Punjab's agricultural economy. National Horticulture Mission has been launched during 2006-07 in the country including Punjab to promote fruits, vegetables, flowers, medicinal and aromatic plants. Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oilpalm and Maize (ISOPOM) is in operation to promote oilseeds, pulses and maize in the State.

Tuna fishing in EEZ

1028. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have issued tender to hire tuna fishing boats to fish in our EEZ waters;

(b) when this offer was made by Government to foreign fishing companies;

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to encourage Indian entrepreneurs to find finance and funds to start tuna fishing in our EEZ waters; and

(d) the reasons for neglecting our highly potential marine fisheries?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.